

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): A method for manufacturing an activated carbon, comprising:

mixing a carbonaceous material and an alkali metal hydroxide while maintaining a solid state to obtain a mixture;

granulating the mixture while maintaining a solid state to obtain a granulated product;

dehydrating the granulated product while maintaining a solid state to obtain a dehydrated product; and

subjecting the dehydrated product to an activation treatment to obtain the activated carbon.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature in said granulating is 80°C or more.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the pressure in said granulating is 0.01 to 300 Torr, and the temperature in said granulating is 90 to 140°C.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the maximum diameter of the granulated product is 50 mm or less.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature in said dehydrating is 200°C or more.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the pressure in said dehydrating is 0.01 to 10 Torr, and the temperature in said dehydrating is 200 to 400°C.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein during said dehydrating, the pressure and the temperature rise rate are set so as to satisfy the following equation (2),

$$Pv < 15 \text{ Torr} \cdot ^\circ\text{C}/\text{minute} \quad (2)$$

wherein P is the pressure (Torr), and v is the temperature rise rate (°C/minute).

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the carbonaceous material is an easily graphitizable carbonaceous material.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the carbonaceous material is a mesophase pitch carbon fiber.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 9, wherein the mesophase pitch carbon fiber comprises 50 vol% or more of an optically anisotropic phase.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the carbonaceous material comprises grains with a maximum length of 500 μm or less in the direction of the major axis.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide has an average particle diameter of 1 mm or less.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide is sodium hydroxide and/or potassium hydroxide.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein no less than 1 part by weight of alkali metal hydroxide is mixed with 1 part by weight of carbonaceous material in said mixing.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature in said activation treatment is 500°C to 900°C.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the rate at which the temperature is raised to 200 to 600°C is 5°C/minute or less, and the holding time at a holding temperature of 700°C or more is 0.5 to 8 hours in the activation treatment.

Claim 17 (Original): The manufacturing method according to claim 16, wherein the rate at which the temperature is raised to 200 to 600°C is 2°C/minute or less.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 16, wherein the holding time at a holding temperature of 700°C or more is 1 to 6 hours.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 16, wherein the holding temperature is 700 to 850°C.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 16, wherein the activation treatment is performed in a rotary kiln.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 20, wherein the activation treatment is a continuous process.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal in vapor form that is generated during activation treatment is sorbed to the activated carbon for sorption by circulating inert gas through the system in at least the activation treatment and contacting the circulating inert gas for 0.5 seconds or more with the activated carbon for sorption wherein the activated carbon has been heated to a temperature of 300 to 800°C.

Claim 23 (Original): The manufacturing method according to claim 22, wherein the circulating inert gas has a linear velocity of 1.0 to 10.0 mm/second.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, wherein said granulating and said dehydrating are performed so as to satisfy the following equation (3),

$$[A1/B1] \geq [A2/B2] \quad (3)$$

wherein A1 (N) is the crushing strength of the granulated product, B1 (cm) is the diameter of the granulated product, A2 (N) is the crushing strength of the dehydrated product, and B2 (cm) is the diameter of the dehydrated product.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 1, further comprising adding a finely pulverized carbonaceous material to the alkali metal hydroxide prior to said mixing in an amount of 0.5 to 10 wt %.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 25, wherein variation in the composition ratio of the alkali metal hydroxide relative to the carbonaceous material in the granulated and/or dehydrated product is 5% or less.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The manufacturing method according to claim 26, wherein variation in the composition ratio of the alkali metal hydroxide relative to the carbonaceous material is 2% or less.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): A dehydration product for an activated carbon obtained by the process comprising

mixing a carbonaceous material and an alkali metal hydroxide while maintaining a solid state to obtain a mixture,

granulating the mixture while maintaining its solid state to obtain a granulated substance, and

dehydrating the granulated substance while maintaining a solid state to obtain the dehydrated product;

wherein said dehydrated product satisfies the following equation (1),

$$[M1/C1]/[M2/C2] \leq 2.4 \quad (1)$$

where [M1/C1] is the alkali metal/carbon ratio in the surface layer region thereof, and
[M2/C2] is the alkali metal/carbon ratio in the center portion thereof.

Claims 29-52 (Cancelled)